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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 001012

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR A/S FRAZER, S/E WILLIAMSON, AF/RSA AND AF/SPG  
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND HUDSON  
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [UN](#) [AU](#) [SU](#)  
SUBJECT: WORRIED GOSS INTENDS TO DISCUSS MILITARY PLANNING  
WITH US OFFICIALS

REF: A. KHARTOUM 1010  
[1](#)B. KHARTOUM 971  
[1](#)C. KHARTOUM 941

Classified By: CDA Alberto M. Fernandez, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: GOSS Minister for Presidential Affairs Luka Biong Deng told CDA Fernandez July 8 that he will travel to Washington next week to discuss military planning with US officials, following up on the Defense White Paper that the US had pushed the GOSS to prepare (ref b). Biong Deng said he is aware that the SAF has increased its air capacity and wishes to discuss how the US would support the SPLA to meet this challenge. Biong Deng also discussed Abyei and the unfortunate shooting of an UNMIS milob July 7 (ref a) and urged greater support to the IDPs in Agok as well as support for their return to Abyei. Biong Deng said there has been no progress breaking the impasse in naming an interim administration for Abyei, but noted the agreement on the arbitration mechanism and asked for US support, especially from the "experts" on the ABC panel, former US Ambassador Don Peterson and British historian Douglas Johnson. Biong Deng said the SPLM would move toward elections with support from the international community, but acknowledged that border demarcation leading to the referendum is even more important in order to prevent a return to war. He worried that Sudan is on a very slow slide towards confrontation that planning for the 2011 referendum will accelerate. End summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Biong Deng, running between meetings and appearing exhausted by his recent negotiations on Abyei, opened the meeting at SPLM headquarters in Khartoum by requesting US assistance meeting SPLA objectives laid out in the Defense White Paper. He said he planned to meet with US officials in Washington next week to discuss the paper, among other issues. The SPLA is aware that the SAF has acquired increased air capacity, according to Biong Deng, and he would like to discuss how the US might assist the SPLA in meeting this challenge. Many in the SPLM feel that President Kiir has been using the word "peace" too much, and that "he has gone soft," observed Biong Deng, who is Kiir's right hand man. "We need to make the SPLA stronger" and prepare for any eventuality, worrying what will happen as the dates for the 2009 elections and 2011 referendum approach. Biong Deng noted that there is the potential for great instability all along the north-south border, and that there has been almost no progress made in border demarcation. "This is something that can be used against us" noted Biong Deng, since there is a big difference between the de facto border and the 1/1/56 border (the true 1/1/56 border is further South, in many cases, and this will cause many Southern communities to be very upset with the GOSS leadership when they are forced to move), "it could potentially drive a wedge between us and our

people and we can't allow that to happen". CDA agreed with Biong Deng that border demarcation and preparation for the elections and the 2011 referendum are probably the most important considerations to maintain a shaky peace in Sudan.

¶3. (C) Given the shooting of an UNMIS milob and a SAF national observer by an SPLA soldier in Agok July 7, of which Biong Deng seemed only remotely aware, CDA urged Biong Deng and others in the GOSS to press the SPLA to exert greater command and control over their troops in Abyei. Biong Deng questioned whether it was not a Southern Sudanese policeman who had been involved, but promised to look further into the incident. Luka complained about 75 "Misseriya gunmen" introduced by the NCP as police into Abyei. Despite promises to remove them (reftel c), they are still there.

¶4. (C) Biong Deng expressed satisfaction with the signing of the "compromis" for the Abyei arbitration by GOSS Vice President Machar and GNU Vice President Taha July 7, and again passed his appreciation for providing the services of State/L advisor Christina Sanford. Biong Deng asked for US financial assistance with the arbitration, noting that the SPLM plans to hire the law firm Wilmer-Hale to advise them, and planned to work with Wendy Miles and Larry Borne of the firm's London office. Biong Deng expressed concern that the US had changed its position on Abyei since 2005, and stepped away from its backing of the ABC report (to position of support for either the ABC report or a mutually-acceptable agreement between the parties). CDA refuted that fear and noted that "Abyei now has Washington's attention." Luka asked for US assistance in supporting the services of ABC panel experts former US Ambassador Don Peterson and British

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historian Douglas Johnson so that they could consult with Wilmer-Hale. However, even if the arbitration results in a change in the ABC findings, Biong Deng said he the SPLM is relatively satisfied with the interim borders provided in the June 8 roadmap. He said the SPLM is concerned that either of the parties will react badly to the findings of the arbitration, "a win or lose scenario," but viewed positively the precedent set by delinking land from oil in the roadmap. "This could help us negotiate wealth-sharing even after the referendum," noted Biong Deng. He asked for continued international engagement with the parties on wealth-sharing strategies in Sudan, especially for after 2011.

¶5. (C) Continuing on the topic of Abyei, Biong Deng asked for greater US assistance with the IDPs in Agok and with further assistance in moving them back to Abyei. Biong Deng said there is a local NGO called "CUSH" led by Francis Deng's son Daniel Deng, associated with the Rotary Club, which has transported useful materials and equipment for IDPs with the assistance of Samaritan's Purse. "There is already pressure that IDPs want to return," said Biong Deng. CDA cautioned against moving IDPs back too soon, but Biong Deng said the situation there is highly politicized and therefore the SAF must leave as soon as possible, allowing the people to return. He requested US assistance with development for Abyei, and CDA noted that the US is ready to step in with several projects as soon as the situation stabilizes. Biong Deng noted that it is unfortunate that progress on the roadmap is being help up by the naming of an interim administration, "but there is no way we can accept a Misseriya or any non-Ngok Dinka" to be the deputy governor of Abyei. "There are other ways they could represent their interests," he said, through the executive council or the legislative council. He said that the SPLM had told the NCP, "you have the right to name a local Misseriya or Nuer," but doing so could be potentially explosive because of local people's anger. "You could see worse than yesterday's shooting," he warned.

¶6. (C) Comment: It is critical that the parties reach an agreement soon on the interim administration, and that the JIUs fully deploy and the SAF 31st brigade fully withdraw.

The longer these steps are held up, the greater is the possibility of fatal drift once again into armed confrontation. We will continue to communicate to the GOS that if the SAF does not fully withdraw from Abyei, there is little hope of further discussions with the US. Given the shooting incident in Agok yesterday, it is clear that tensions are extremely high and forces on the ground are not well controlled. The defeat of SPLA forces at Abyei by the SAF and worries about NCP intentions towards the South during the key 2009-2011 period have no doubt made GOSS leadership much more focused on military capacity, which provides the much of the impetus for Biong Deng's visit to the US to discuss the Defense White Paper. And the issue of border demarcation, just on the horizon, has the potential of creating Abyei-type confrontations between migratory Arab tribes, supported by the NCP, and sedentary African tribes, backed up by the SPLA, all along the thousand kilometer plus swath of border between North and South Sudan. End comment.

FERNANDEZ